

REMARKS

Applicant and the undersigned thank Examiner Bomar for his careful review of this application. Consideration of the present application in view of the remarks and amendments to the claims is respectfully requested.

By the present communication, claims 6-9, 113, 115, 118, 123 and 154 have been cancelled. Claims 10-24, 31, 34, 37, 39-41, 43, 44, 53, 66-93, 95, 98, 100-102, 104, 105, 110-112, 116, 117, 120, 127, 129, 130, 132-141, 143, 145-147, 149, 150, and 153 have been withdrawn. Claims 111 and 116 have been amended. Thus, claims 1-5, 25-30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 38, 42, 45-52, 54-65, 94, 96, 97, 99, 103, 106-109, 114, 119, 121, 122, 124-126, 128, 131, 142, 144, 148, 151, and 152 remain pending in the present application.

The Examiner asserted in the January 8, 2008 communication that Applicant's response was incomplete since there are numerous claims pending that do not correspond to elected Species I.

Claims 1-153 were subject to election of species under PCT Rule 13.1 in the restriction requirement mailed on September 18, 2007. In the response filed on October 18, 2007, Applicant elected Species I corresponding to Figures 1-2b, wherein the tubular sleeve has an internal flange, for examination. Upon review, Applicant believes claims 1, 25, 26, 28-30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 42, 45-51, 54-56, 94, 96, 97, 99, 103, 106-108, 121, 124, 125, 128, 144, 148, and 152 are generic with respect to the species noted by the Examiner since each of the species include or can include the limitations cited in each of those claims and those limitations do not fall within any of the species set forth by the Examiner. Applicant believes claim 2-5, 27, 52, 57-65, 109, 114, 119, 122, 126, and 131 correspond directly to Species I, which was elected in the prior response. Therefore, Applicant believes that claims 1-5, 25-30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 38, 42, 45-52, 54-65, 94, 96, 97, 99, 103, 106-109, 114, 119, 121, 122, 124-126, 128, 131, 142, 144, 148, 151, and 152 should remain pending in the present application. Applicant has withdrawn or canceled the remaining claims for this application.

Applicant reserves the right to pursue the unelected species in a divisional or continuation application. Consideration and allowance of all claims is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing is submitted as a full and complete Response to the Communication mailed January 8, 2008. Applicant has made a diligent effort to advance the prosecution of the application by submitting arguments in support of the patentability of the claims. Applicant has not acquiesced to any rejection and reserves the right to address the patentability of any additional claim features in the future. In view of the above, consideration of the rejections and allowance of claims 1-5, 25-30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 38, 42, 45-52, 54-65, 94, 96, 97, 99, 103, 106-109, 114, 119, 121, 122, 124-126, 128, 131, 142, 144, 148, 151, and 152 are respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned via telephone at the number listed below if a telephone conference would expedite or aid the prosecution and examination of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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